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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/560,171	12/09/2005	Yukio Aoki	09852/0203745-US0	1361
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EXAMINER HEVEY, JOHN A				
ART UNIT		PAPER NUMBER		
1793				
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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/560,171

Applicant(s)

AOKI, YUKIO

Examiner

JOHN A. HEVEY

Art Unit

1793

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 06 October 2008.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1, 3 and 4 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1, 3 and 4 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☒ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/CDC)
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: _____
- Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____

DETAILED ACTION

Status of Application

Claims 2 and 5-8 are cancelled, claim 1 is amended. Claims 1, 3, and 4 are pending and presented for examination.

The rejections of claims 1-4 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) have been withdrawn in view of applicant amendment of claim 1 and certified translation of priority documents; however, upon further search and consideration a new grounds of rejection is put forth as detailed below.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

3. Claims 1 and 3-4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tsuda et al. (US6057046, of record) in view of Nemeth et al. (US4610931).

In regards to claim 1, Tsuda et al. teaches a sintered alloy useful for cutting tools, comprising WC-TiC, 5-25 wt% of a binder comprising Ni and Co, and 2-15 wt% of one or more selected from Ta carbonitride, Nb carbonitride, and others (see claim 7). Thus, the reference teaches a composition which overlaps with the instantly claimed ranges. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to select from the portion of the overlapping ranges. Overlapping ranges have been held to establish prima facie obviousness (see MPEP 2144.05). Tsuda, however, does not specifically teach the use of Ta carbonitride and Nb carbonitride satisfying the relation as required by claim 1.

Nemeth et al. teaches a cemented carbide material comprising WC, Ti, Co binder, TaC and NbC (forming TaCN and NbCN after a nitrogen addition step)(see examples 4 and 5, col 9-10). Nemeth further teaches a specific example comprising 3.1 wt% NbC and 1.9 wt% TaC, prior to the addition of nitrogen, which would necessarily read on the instantly claimed ranges and relational expression (see col 10, ln 24-51).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to select from the teachings of Tsuda a WC-Co material further comprising carbonitrides of Ta and Nb falling within the instantly claimed ranges. Tsuda in view of Nemeth teach the substitutability of carbides, nitrides, and carbonitrides of Ta and Nb as additives to WC-TiC-Co materials, and optimization of the their respective contents within the disclosed ranges would have been obvious to one of ordinary

skill in the art at the time of the invention in order to increase the reliability and toughness of the material for cutting tool applicability.

In regards to claim 3, although the reference is silent to the specific fracture toughness of the material at room temperature, the references teach a material having substantially the same composition and method of making the composition, thus it would necessarily follow that the composition would possess the same properties as instantly claimed.

In regards to claim 4, Tsuda is drawn to cemented carbide materials used to form surface coated cutting tools (see for example, Tsuda col 2, ln 61-67). Thus, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to form a surface coated gear cutting tool comprising a cemented carbide material as taught by Tsuda as described above. The use of WC based cemented carbide materials for gear cutting tools is well known in the art (Tsuda col 1, ln 22-30) and one of ordinary skill in the art would have recognized the ability to use such a material to form said tool, in order to benefit from the enhanced reliability and thermal shock resistance of the material as taught by Tsuda.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1, 3, and 4 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to JOHN A. HEVEY whose telephone number is (571)270-3594. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday - Friday 8:00 AM to 5:30 PM EST.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Jessica Ward can be reached on 571-272-1223. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/J. A. H./
Examiner, Art Unit 1793

/Kevin P. Kerns/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 1793